Knowledge Center Feedback Summary (11/2010)

From mid-September through late-October 2010, the Enterprise Support Network (ESN) Tiger Team gathered feedback from the caBIG® community about the Knowledge Center program. This was done to solicit feedback on a key caBIG® support resource, and to evaluate any changes that may be advised in the future. Feedback was gathered from Annual Meeting participants in a facilitated session, from Deployment Leads in an Annual Meeting session, from Workspace participants in a series of workspace calls, the SAIC-Frederick Knowledge Center Contracting Team, and from NCI Facilitators.

This document summarizes and categorizes key themes received during these sessions. Four categories were identified to organize and help make the feedback more actionable as planning continues in the future:

- Positive Feedback to Help Communicate Value
- Items that the Program Should Consider
- Other Considerations for the Future
- Possible Evaluation Criteria for Evaluating KC Success

For the most part, feedback was consistent across the information sources, although the Cancer Center Deployment Leads (CDLs) (NCI Community Cancer Centers Program [NCCCP] Deployment POCs are included in this group) raised some issues that did not emerge as clearly during the open session or the workspace calls. These items are noted as coming from the CDLs below.

Positive Feedback to Help Communicate Value

- The benefit of "High Touch" contacts was cited as a strength – customized responses to answer a specific question or concern
- Enthusiastic KC members: willingness to help and interest in making caBIG® successful
- User Forums a strength
- Google Analytics is a great tool to identify sources of visitors and their interests—helps to focus and inform KC activity
- Demo sites perceived as a strength; CDLs also mentioned webinars as a particular strength, especially when tailored to the audience.

Items that the Program Should Consider

- **There is conflicting feedback about the degree of connection KCs have to other program entities:**

    Positive: Interaction and communication with NCI and SAIC-F leads is effective at aligning KC priorities and activities with program needs; Close collaboration with Development teams help provide quality products and timely support; and regular updates about the caBIG® program/workspaces are helpful.

    But needs improvement: Workspaces and KCs should be more tightly integrated; Better integration of the project teams and KC; Need more communication and coordination between KCs, CDLs, and In Silico Research Centers of Excellence; Better communication with CBIIT

development and support staff, need clearer communication channel; Need better planning and communication of milestones for new initiatives and better information about future release schedules; KCs need access to tools (at least one week in advance to KC) before releases – need more training and knowledge exchange between development and KC tools; need to get names aligned between knowledge centers and workspaces

- **Continuing feedback about the need to reevaluate and continue to improve KC web content strategy.** More consistent organization across KC Wikis needed—it's hard to find information. KC sites have diverged in main page consistency (All sources uniformly noted this problem – it's hard to find the information needed.)

- **Interest in more structured Customer Relationship Management (CRM) approaches and better tracking of users.** (1) Difficult to track customers/adopters due to many means of communication—no CRM software therefore hard to report correctly; (2) Difficult to quantify customer interactions and compare across KCs; (3) Difficult to track/follow adopters of supported tools—need more automated method for tracking

- **Need a Better Issue/Ticketing Tracking Mechanisms.** Allow addition of forum extensions to allow users and KC to mark topics as answered; Tool to log/track issues with ability to have a user defined success/closure criteria. CDLs: Need a more structured and accountability-focused ticketing approach.

- **Better Integration Across Tools (Continuous Integration, Compatibility Matrices between tools)**. For CDLs deploying multiple tools, the ability to deploy multiple tools and integrate more easily across them is really important.

- **Continue to improve and increase structure of Cross-KC Collaboration.** Monday calls with the KC Operations Managers are informal ways to connect, and ad hoc connections are frequently done, but there still need to be more formal ways of integrating and aligning across KCs – having each other informed of each others' activities, taking big picture look at the sciences across domains, and more collaboration and cross-connections between KCs.

- **Greater Emphasis on Effective Documentation.** Documentation continues to be an issue from those deploying caBIG® tools. Are enough resources being allocated to this activity, and do the people generating the documentation have the right skills? (Relates to staffing, resource allocation, and KC oversight) – This issue was particularly highlighted by the CDLs.

- **Consider central entry point and triage center to coordinate across KCs**. (1) Central point of contact to engage large groups (e.g. Clinical and Translational Science Award sites, NCCCPs) in coordinated fashion, triage to each KC; (2) One stop shopping entry point for people who don't know what they need yet.

- Enhance the role of the KCs in linking community code contributions to ongoing caBIG-funded software development

Other Considerations for the Future

- Different KCs have emphasized in different places – some offer primarily technical assistance with tools, other are more domain-specialized. Need to look carefully at the intent of the KC's form of support: high touch (hard to scale), versus innovative R&D for caBIG®, versus scalable "Help Desk" like support – what is wanted, and what are the trade-offs?

- **Confirm the Staffing Mix.** Need greater emphasis on documentation quality and regular updates to align with releases – need to ensure that staffing and allocated resources are appropriate for the documentation to be done. Same applies to other tasks such as outreach - if outreach is a funded activity, the KC needs to have capability to do it effectively.

- **Non-Traditional Service Schedules.** Need to consider how to manage service across time zones for international outreach – forum responsiveness and phone calls – how to deal with non-traditional hours without leading to burnout (e.g., KCs are doing late night calls and forum checks to keep up with international time zones)

- **Bug Fixes? Outreach?** Bug fixes are part of the standard list of KC services, but how many actually do them? Many seem to be covered by development teams, or under different funded contracts – is this a line item to keep, or apply only to specific tools?

- **Role in caBIG 2.0**. Consider involving the KCs more formally in the caBIG 2.0 evolution, possibly playing a front line role in community (both end-user and developer) engagement and interaction.

Possible Evaluation Criteria for Evaluating KC Success

- Responsiveness; Ability to process issues quickly; Availability
- Ability to anticipate customer's needs
- Demonstrated domain expertise
- Ability to facilitate promotion/adaption outside caBIG®
- Provide helpful feedbacks to users (answer questions in the forum, tool supports with updates)
- Number of successful adopters of tools supported by KC
- Number of hits to the sites—usage
- Breadth of support for designated tools/domain
- Flexibility
- Ability to draw in/train graduate/post-doc potential future caBIG® members
- Appropriate staffing for appropriate roles (e.g., documentation and training).
- Knowledge of other tools in caBIG program that would logically be deployed with the tools managed by the specific KC.
- Ability to demonstrate success stories, deployment of tools, and effective use cases.